



FINNEY INJURY LAW
- TRIAL LAWYERS -

1600 S. BRENTWOOD BLVD.
SUITE 220 • ST. LOUIS, MO 63144
FINNEYINJURYLAW.COM // 314-293-4222



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Diwali's Festival of Lights INSIDE INDIA'S BIGGEST HOLIDAY

India's biggest holiday, Diwali, is celebrated by over one billion people yearly and is gaining prominence in the U.S. In 2022, President Biden held the largest White House Diwali celebration to date, and New York City has made it a public school holiday. But even as Americans recognize it more than ever, many still don't know the day exists.

Diwali is also known as the Festival of Lights, and celebrations take place across five days every year. The schedule for Diwali follows the lunar calendar, much like Easter, so the dates of celebration change. While it usually falls in October, this year's Diwali will occur on Nov. 12, with celebrations taking place Nov. 10-14. So, there's still plenty of time to plan if you want to participate!

Hindi Indians have celebrated Diwali for more than 2,500 years, but with many stories associated with its origins, scholars are unsure when the festival started. However, the festival is inextricably linked with the victory of good versus evil and the god Krishna. It also marks the birth of the goddess Lakshmi. For Jains and Sikhs, the holiday holds other religious significance. Much like Christmas in the U.S., Diwali now has a secular cultural meaning, and non-religious people might also celebrate.

Many consider Diwali a fresh start, much like New Year's Day. People celebrate with firecrackers and rows of lamps, representing the triumph of light over darkness. Each of the five festival days has its own name and meaning.



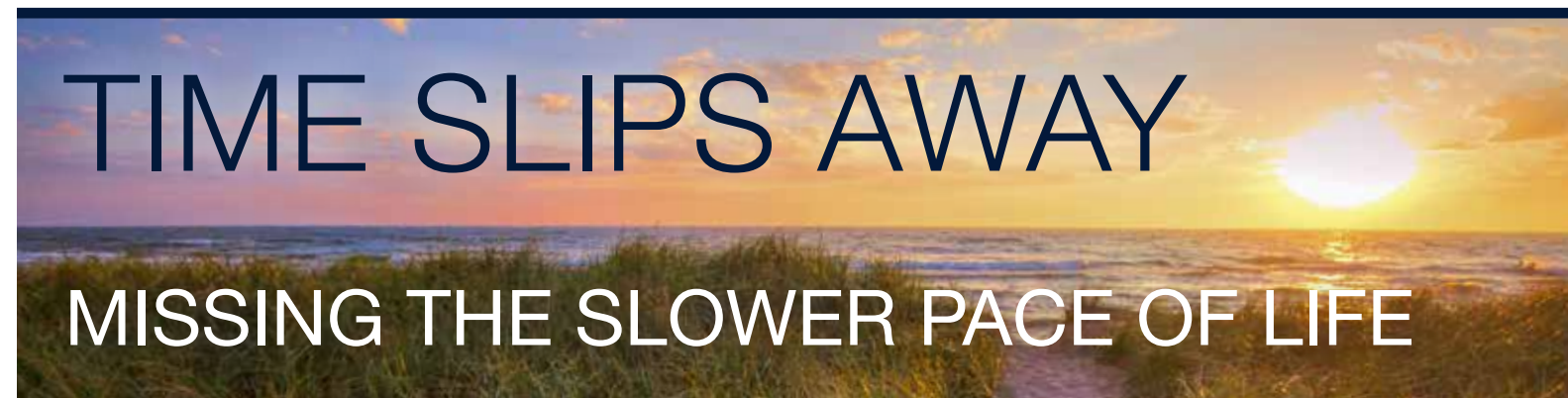
The festival is named for the third day, which hosts the most significant celebration. Families wear their best clothes, gather for large meals, and celebrate with song and dance.

If you've never celebrated Diwali, you can count on all six Hindu Temples in the St. Louis area to engage in festivities. BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir will hold events on Nov. 12 and 13, while other temples will likely announce plans soon. Call ahead to confirm that they welcome non-congregants, but most are pleased to share their traditions with respectful newcomers. Happy Diwali!

TRIALS & THEIR TALES

- NEWSLETTER -

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This fall is going to be great. That is what I keep telling myself each day I look at the calendar. In my house, there are two calendars or more. (I assume it's the same with most households with kids.) One calendar is for my work, and the other is for family events. My wife even keeps a paper calendar as well — I guess as a preview before she then enters events into our family calendar.

This fall is packed with sports and plenty more. Work is packed as well, though work stuff has a higher likelihood of going away due to a continuance or settlement or the like. Either way, we need to be prepared and we are working toward that. Each week, we try to give some more responsibility to others in the office and see what can be done with that. We are trying to have people continue to grow in roles that suit them. Finding what suits them is the part I am struggling with. I want everyone in the office to succeed at their job. It is a tough balance.

With all this activity going on, I found myself looking at my phone the last few days with the same thought: I wish I didn't have it. I wish I had a flip phone. I wish I had a landline. I wish lawyers sent letters rather than emails. I wish things moved a little slower so I had more time to ponder. I am not quick enough or witty enough on my feet to respond that fast. I make promises I shouldn't, only to have a defense lawyer put emails in a filing for the court to see. I mean, half the time I cannot remember sending it or it was one of 200 I sent that day.

Far too often, emails become text messages. Responses are expected within minutes. I am guilty of this. There is something in us that aims to please. Even my opponent who would like to see me and my client get nothing. Why do I aim to please them? It makes no sense. They get to bill for the

mindless emailing back and forth. My side does not bill for busy work. We recover based on results. That is it.

Recently, I watched my good friend try a case in St. Louis County. It was incredible to be a pseudo-juror. I heard things in a different way and experienced the trial in a different way. I gained new insights and reinforced some things I had learned. Honestly, I walked away from it thinking, "I have to do this weekly if I am going to improve." It was that beneficial. My friend is a great lawyer as well, so that helped.

And maybe that is what I am missing: slowing things down to learn and absorb. Too often, learning is expected to happen at an incredible rate. Slow and steady improvement takes patience. It takes attention. It takes commitment. To see slow and steady improvement, you have to really focus. To knock away the noise and drill down. Who can do that these days? When can they do that with texts, calls, emails, and, yes, letters still coming?

At some point, I am going to have to begin really cutting and drilling down on what matters. This noise has to go away. We've been trying to do that in our cases and trying to be efficient. It takes a lot of effort. I am reminded of that Mark Twain quote when he sent a letter to a newspaper editor. I believe he said, "Sorry for the length, I didn't have time to make it shorter."

As I approach 40 — well, I will be 40 when you read this — I need more time to make things shorter like this column.

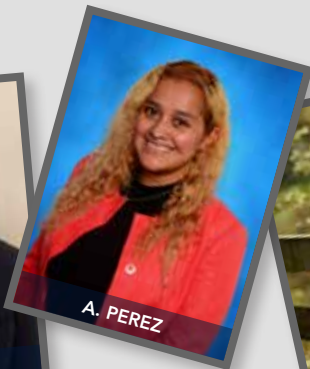
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Congratulations to Our 2023 Scholarship Recipients

We extend our sincerest congratulations to the recipients of the 2023 Finney Injury Law Scholarship. It is with great honor and appreciation that we award these ten deserving students with a total of \$25,000 in scholarship funds. Each student will receive \$2,500 to use toward tuition, school supplies, and testing fees. It is through their dedication and hard work that they have earned this scholarship, and we thank them for their commitment to their education. We are confident that they will continue to excel and make a positive impact in their chosen fields. Thank you for allowing us to be a small part in their journey toward success. To learn more about the winners, visit [FinneyInjuryLaw.com/blog/celebrating-2023-scholarship-winners](https://finneyinjurylaw.com/blog/celebrating-2023-scholarship-winners).

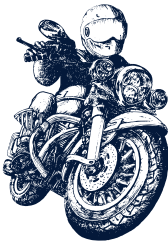
R. Ables – St. Louis University School of Law
C. Birgans – University of Illinois Springfield
M. Colvin – Howard University
M. Cook – St. Louis University School of Law
L. Iler - St. Louis University School of Law



J. Meadows – University of Missouri
A. Perez - St. Louis University School of Law
H. Porter – Lewis & Clark Community College
G. Spiess – University of Missouri - Columbia
K. Whitney – Howard University

The Shared Responsibility of Motorcycle Safety

WHY RIDERS AND DRIVERS BOTH PLAY A ROLE



While motorcycle owners love the feeling of freedom and wind in their hair, there's no doubt riding a motorcycle is riskier than driving a car. Motorcycles lack the protection other motor vehicles offer, and a collision with a motorcycle is also a direct collision with the rider. For that reason, both automobile drivers and motorcyclists must exercise caution on the road.

Auto drivers play a crucial role in preventing motorcycle accidents. Motorcycles' compact nature makes them easier to miss on the road, and many collisions occur when car and truck drivers don't notice them. Drivers should always check their blind spots and mirrors before turning or changing lanes and stay a safe distance from motorcycles. Further, they should never try to pass a motorcycle in the same lane.

Motorcyclists, on the other hand, must drive defensively. The best course of action is to behave as if they are invisible. Assuming other vehicles cannot see them makes a rider more cautious and likely to avoid a collision. It's also wise to consider enrolling in a motorcycle safety course.

The most crucial thing motorcycle riders can do to protect themselves is wear a Department of Transportation (DOT) approved helmet. Unfortunately, Missouri amended its helmet laws in 2020 and no longer requires riders 26 or older with health insurance to wear helmets. The Missouri Department of Transportation opposed the change, and the state experienced a 40% increase in motorcycle fatalities the following year — including an 800% increase in deaths among motorcycle riders who were not wearing helmets.

With this new reality, we urge drivers to be even more cautious around motorcycles; a car can do significantly more damage to a helmetless rider. We also encourage everyone who rides a motorcycle to wear a helmet regardless of the law. It's much safer and can affect your compensation in an accident. A jury might find a helmetless rider partially responsible for their injuries and award a lower recovery amount.

Regardless of what the law says, wearing a helmet just makes sense. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that DOT-approved helmets reduce motorcycle operators' fatality risk by 37% and lower the chance of head injury by 69%. That makes the safety measure well worth any hassle it might cause.

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF LUCCA, THE EXPLOSIVE-DETECTING DOG WHO SAVED LIVES

Sometimes, dogs are more than just a man's best friend — they are heroes. When the Israel Defense Forces brought Chris Willingham, a Marine specializing in training military dogs, a small German shepherd and Belgian Malinois mix puppy in 2006, he knew she was special.

Willingham named her Lucca, and in 2008, the pair deployed for their first tour in Iraq, where they spent countless hours together searching for improvised explosive devices or IEDs. When Lucca smelled a bomb, she'd lie down and wait for Willingham, an action they repeated so many times that the pair seemed to read each other's minds. In fact, the duo became so successful that when platoons suspected they were heading into especially dangerous territory, they requested the team by name.

After returning from their second tour in Iraq, Willingham received orders that the Marines were restationing him at the Marine Security Guard School. But before he had to leave, he was allowed to choose a new handler for Lucca. Willingham chose Corporal Juan Rodriguez, whom he sensed was the perfect match for Lucca. And he was right.

Lucca and Rodriguez picked up where she and Willingham left off until one day in 2012. The pair were four hours into

their patrol in southern Afghanistan when Lucca located her second IED of the day. However, when she moved closer to the device to lie down — it exploded.

Rodriguez quickly ran to Lucca, where he discovered she had lost one of her front paws in the explosion. He applied first aid, a tourniquet, and called for a medevac, never leaving her side. She had suffered burns to her neck and torso, and doctors had to amputate her front left leg.

However, in less than a month, Lucca was back to running around with the same spirit as before her injury but was now retired from her day job. She was reunited with Willingham and lived the rest of her days with him and his family peacefully until her passing in 2018.

Lucca led more than 400 patrols during three combat tours in her career. She found 40 confirmed insurgents and countless explosives, and she never had a single human casualty during her six years of service.



The Best Chocolate Chip Cookies

| INGREDIENTS | DIRECTIONS |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour1 tsp baking soda1 tsp salt1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened3/4 cup granulated sugar3/4 cup packed brown sugar1 tsp vanilla extract2 large eggs2 cups (12-oz package) semi-sweet chocolate chips | <ol style="list-style-type: none">Preheat oven to 375 F.In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt.In a large bowl, beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla extract until creamy.To the creamed mixture, add eggs, one at a time, beating until blended.Gradually beat in flour mixture.Stir in chocolate chips.Arrange dough in rounded teaspoonfuls on ungreased baking sheets.Bake 8-10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; move to wire racks to cool completely. |

YOUR REFERRALS
MEAN THE
WORLD TO US

There is no greater compliment we can receive than a client telling a friend or loved one about us. If you know somebody who has been injured and needs an attorney who will fight on their behalf and give their case the attention it deserves, please pass along this newsletter and have them give us a call at 314-293-4222. Thank you for spreading the word about Finney Injury Law.